

Claims

1. A portable device comprising:
a user interface;
a light detector for detecting the light incident on at least part of the user interface;
a comparator for comparing the light detected with a given threshold;
and control means for controlling an illuminator for illuminating the user interface in dependence upon the output of the comparator.
2. A device as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the light detector is positioned to detect light incident on the device, which light is the sum of ambient light and the light from the illuminator.
3. A device according to claim 2 wherein the user interface is a display.
4. A device as claimed in claim 1, 2 or 3 wherein the control means disables the user interface illuminator in response to an indication by the comparator that the light detected exceeds a first threshold.
5. A device as claimed in any preceding claim wherein the control means enables the user interface illuminator in response to an indication by the comparator that the light detected is less than a second threshold.
6. A device as claimed in claim 5, when dependent upon claim 4, wherein the control means partially enables the user interface illuminator in response to an indication by the comparator that the light detected is between the first and second thresholds.
7. A device as claimed in any preceding claim, further comprising means for determining a change in output of the light detector over a predetermined period, wherein the control means is arranged to disable functionality relating

8. A device as claimed in claim 7, wherein the control means is arranged to disable the user interface in response to an indication that no change is determined.

9. A device as claimed in claim 7 or 8, wherein the control means is arranged to disable the user interface illuminator in response to an indication that no change is determined.

10. A device as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the user interface comprises input means responsive to a user.

11. A device as claimed in claim 10, wherein the control means control the functionality relating to the user interface on the basis of settings input by the user via the input means.

12. A device as claimed in claim 10 or 11, wherein the input means comprises touch means, such as a key and/or display region.

13. A device as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the user interface comprises output means.

14 A device as claimed in claim 13, wherein the output means comprises a display.

15. A device as claimed in any preceding claim, which is a portable communications device such as a radiotelephone.

16. A method of controlling a handportable device including a user interface, the method comprising; detecting the light incident on at least part

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of the user interface; ~~comparing the light detected with a given threshold; and~~
controlling illumination of the user interface in dependence upon the output of
the comparator.

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17. A portable device substantially as hereinbefore described with
reference to and/or as illustrated in any one or any combination of the Figures
of the accompanying drawings.

10 18. A method of controlling functionality of the user interface of a portable
device substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to and/or as
illustrated in any one or any combination of the Figures of the accompanying
drawings.

15 19. A system for controlling the functionality of a user interface of a
portable device, substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to
and/or as illustrated in any one or any combination of the Figures of the
accompanying drawings.

20 20. A display module for an electronic device, the display module
comprising
a display panel having a front face to be viewed by a user and a
reverse face,

an illuminator for illuminating the display panel,

25 a light detector for detecting light incident on at least part of the display
panel, the light detector being positioned adjacent the reverse face of the
display panel to detect light incident on the device, which light is the sum of
ambient light and the light from the illuminator,

a comparator for comparing the light detected with a given threshold,

30 and

control means for controlling the illuminator in dependence on the
output of the comparator.

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